**Critical Reflection**

**Gibbs Model of reflection:**

Professor Graham Gibbs published a book called “Learning by Doing”. In this book designed a model of critical reflection called The Gibbs Reflective Cycle. (Graham Gibbs. 1988).

**Description**

The group was given the task to design a game that used the theme Cyber Security and Cyber Crime. Initially the group got together and discussed basic ideas on how to go about designing a game and we discussed ideas that group members put forward. Then the Group discussed what each member was good at, for example some people were better at the coding aspect of the game and others were better at the design parts. This gave a clear idea on where the game was heading. The group finalised their ideas and started to delegate roles based on what people were good at. Then the group had weekly meeting to discuss the games progress and what else needed to be done. During these meetings the initial game idea was changed because new ideas started to form and the group worked out how it could be added to the game. The group then split off and each did their separate parts individually. Once the individual parts were completed the group had more meetings to discuss how to put the parts that people had done together and if anything else needed to be done. The group then put the work together and made a final instance of the game.

**Feelings**

The feelings of the group were that the plan of action was one that fitted the group member’s individual working styles. Most members preferred to have a few meeting to make a plan of action and then go away and do the work on their own. Then take the work and report back to the group for criticisms.

**Evaluation**

The good thing about this group project was that it gave experience in being put into a group of people which you don’t already know; none of us knew each other when we began. This was a good thing because it allowed people to better express their ideas on where they would like to head with the game. It also allowed people to better use their skills to help the team with the project. Another good thing about the experience was that the group had a diverse range of skills which made the project easier than if it was an individual assignment.

A bad part of the experience was how it took a while for the group to get going with the assignment and to actually start producing work. For the first few weeks there wasn’t a lot of communication and there was a lot of procrastination. However once the group agreed on a final idea for the game each person was able to contribute work and the game was completed on time.

**Analysis**

The group project as a whole went well because the final product was something that every member of the group can be proud of. Every member of the group was able to contribute to the final product which came out very well.

**Conclusion**

The group could have started on the project a lot earlier which would have left more time to get a better game together. Most of the work time was spent not doing anything but as soon as work began a lot got done in a little amount of time. If the group had started work straight away the end product would probably have been better because more thins could have been added to it.

**Action Plan**

If the Group was to complete a project again it would need to start work a lot sooner. The group would also need to communicate a lot more and have more meetings to discuss each other’s progress. More meetings would also have resulted in more game ideas being put across which may have helped to make a better game.

**Belbin Roles**

Belbin roles are a system designed by Dr. R. M. Belbin which is used to identify people’s behavioural strengths and weaknesses in the workplace. (Dr. R. M. Belbin.2012)

The group members completed the Belbin roles questionnaire and found out what their individual roles were. These roles were used to make the team more effective because while they told the group what they good at, they also tell you what you are bad at. For example according to the Belbin roles system monitor evaluators lack drive and lack the ability to inspire others. This group had 3 monitor evaluators in it so we knew that people would need to be self motivated instead of relying on others to motivate them.

The Belbin roles also helped identify which team members wouldn’t be able to make the tough decisions so the team could make the decision then inform the team members that would have slowed the process down. This helped with getting the game going because the group wasn’t stuck on which game ideas to pick.

Finding out the each of the group members Belbin roles helped decide which members of the group should be given which task. For example the group knew not to make the Implementer in the group be in charge of choosing a final game idea because Implementers tend to be inflexible when it comes to choosing new ideas. The group could also avoid relying on the Plant to add the finishing touched on the project because Plants tend to dwell on the small parts and that would probably have resulted in an unfinished product.

The Belbin roles helped the group run more smoothly because instead of figuring out what someone was like to work with through experience, which takes time, the group already knew what people’s preferences and styles were when it comes to group work. Knowing what people are good at ahead of time allows groups to work around situations. For example if most of the group have a procrastinating style the other group members can watch for them not doing their part.

Dr. R. M. Belbin stated that the key to a good working group was in the balance of roles. (Dr. R. M. Belbin.2012) In this groups case this was true. The group had a wide range of Belbin roles and used them to work as a better team. The group was lacking in 2 of the Belbin roles. These were completer finisher and resource investigators. Completer finishers are known for their ability to be very effective at the end of a task to finish off the works errors helping it to be of a better quality. Knowing the group was lacking in this kind of role meant that they could plan around it and make sure that nothing was left up until the last minute by having regular discussions on the progress of the assignment. Resource investigators are known for researching into other peoples projects and seeing how their own project can be made to stand out. Knowing that the group was lacking in these types of roles, they had to ensure that they each found out what the oppositions were designing and come up with ideas on how to make the project better, instead of relying on other people to find out for the group.

The group had three members who were Monitor Evaluators. Monitor evaluators are known for looking for all available options before making a decision. This mean that before the group decided on an idea for the project they weighed up all available options before settling on an idea. For example, most of the group’s members were proficient in the use of Unity which is why the Monitor evaluators decided that the groups game would be made using Unity because the groups members already had a lot of experience using the software. The fact that the group had three Monitor evaluators was not necessarily a good thing because they are known for being overly critical, slow moving and they lack the drive to inspire others. Knowing this however meant that the group knew they could not rely on other members for inspiration. Knowing this meant that inspiration was no longer a factor because the group knew that they would have to inspire themselves. With regards to being overly critical and slow moving the groups Monitor evaluators did not really suffer from these traits.

**Tuckman’s 1965 model of the stages of group development**

Tuckman’s 1965 model of group development is made up for four stages;

1. Forming
2. Storming
3. Norming
4. Performing

Forming

This is where the group depends highly on the leader for guidance. Little is known about each person’s ability and responsibilities.

Storming

This is where team members attempt to establish themselves in relation to other team members. Some idea of where the group is heading exists but there is still much uncertainty. This is also were power struggles can occur and this can lead to emotional issues.

Norming

This is where agreement largely forms among the team. Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted. Big decisions are made by the group. Commitment and unity is strong. The team may also engage in social activities. There is general respect for the leader.

Performing

This is where the team becomes strategically aware. The team is clear on what it’s doing and why it’s doing it. The team no longer needs leadership to be able to perform. The team focuses on over achievement. Some disagreements can still occur but now the team can be resolved in a positive way. (Alan Chapman. 2001)

This groups experience differed from Tuckman’s model in many ways. The group skipped over the Forming stage because it didn’t need a leader to control the group and state where they should be heading. The group instantly knew what their individual roles were and what their part was in the group. Skipping the Forming stage greatly increased the amount of work that the group could complete.

The group touched upon the Storming stage because group members quickly established themselves in relation to the other group members. But then instead of the group still being uncertain on where the work was heading, everyone had a clear idea on what to do. This meant that they could do the work individually without need of leadership. This also meant that no emotional issues occurred.

The group was able to move to the Norming stage very quickly because they were able to agree on where the group was headed concerning the game idea.

The group then moved to the performing stage. Every team member was clear on what their individual task was and what they needed to do for the group. The group did not need any leadership because they were all strategically aware. However the group did not try to over achieve which lead to the group not having any disagreement and the last minute.

**Evaluation**

The group project as a whole was a success. This is based on how the group worked well together, there weren’t any arguments at any point and the final game was one that everyone was pleased with. The part that the group could have done better was the communication part and how long it took for the group to make a start on the project.

Having a diverse range of Belbin roles defiantly helped the group work better as a team because each group member could focus on what they were good at. If it was a group full of Shapers all the work would have been left until the last minute and not a lot of work would have been done.

Tuckman’s 1965 model of group development also showed how well the group worked together because they skipped out the two stages where not a lot of work is done and where a lot of leadership is needed.

Reference List

Graham Gibbs. (1988). *Gibbs' Reflective Cycle.* Available: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/reflective-cycle.htm. Last accessed 14/04/2015.

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